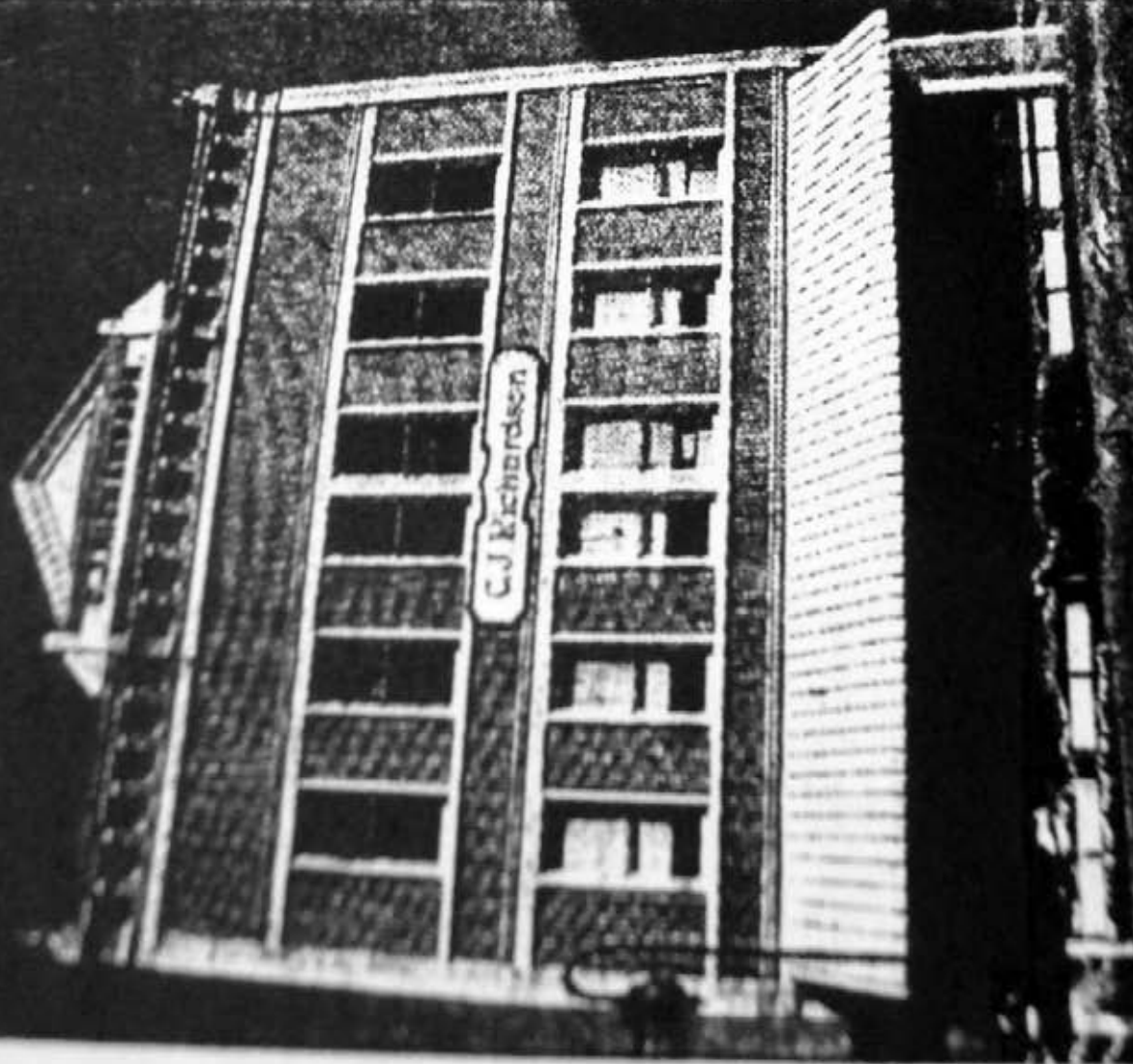


Googie Richardson's father opened  
a store on the banks of the Greenb  
More than 90 years later, the store  
by the years — still selling applian  
and pocketknives to Pocahontas  
sidents.

AB

**INSTITUTION:** The C.J. Richardson store has withstood both time and the elements, including a damaging 1985 flood.





# Store stuck in time

■ Family business has become a landmark in downtown Marlinton

by THERESE COX  
DAILY MAIL STAFF

**M**ARLINTON — Propping his arm on a skinny ceiling ladder, Google Richardson surveyed his Main Street hardware, unaware that his store was something out of the ordinary.

He glanced at the 15-foot jammed tin ceilings, row upon row of wooden shelves, bins overflowing with all sizes of nails. Workers scurried around filling orders, calling customers by first name.

To him, the crisp November day was business as usual — people asking for pipe, water heaters and nails. Locals feeling fishing rods and measuring mattresses, inquiring about someone to fix a faucet or to install a stove.

But to a newcomer, Richardson's store represents more than what merely meets the eye. In the truest sense, it is an anachronism.

For nearly a century, almost nothing has changed. Except maybe for the freight elevator



**FAMILY BUSINESS:** Google Richardson's store, C.J. Richardson, has been doing business in downtown Marlinton since 1901.

Times newspaper. Publisher Jane Price Sharp said it's been in the upper right corner for 90 years.

But this three-story, sky-blue landmark across from the First National Bank in Marlinton isn't simply some antiquated anomaly or a history lesson tucked away in a tiny town.

Richardson, 67, and his 10 em-

Marlinton. An engineer, the elder Richardson had contracted malaria while in South America establishing a gold mine.

His brother, a physician for the C&O railroad, lured him back to the Allegheny Mountains "for his health," Richardson said. The family owned thousands of acres of property in nearby Bath County, Va.

"He loved to hunt and fish," Richardson said. After he



Richardson's store, C.J. Richardson-  
Downtown Marlinton since 1901.

Marlinton. An engineer, the elder Richardson had contracted malaria while in South America establishing a gold mine.

His brother, a physician for the C&O railroad, lured him back to the Allegheny Mountains "for his health," Richardson said. The family owned thousands of acres of property in nearby Bath County, Va.

"He loved to hunt and fish," Richardson said.

And that he did. After he moved the store in 1903 a few blocks east, beside the soon-

The Pocahontas County  
\$1 1/2 million in business

to-be-laid railroad track proprietor left most of the to his men. Every year spend three months hunting two months fishing in the woods and waters, Richardson said.

"And he went home every afternoon and took a nap part of that would seem permanent vacation. It's not like that now. It's impossible to get away."

Richardson remembered grandfather and the early well.

cal supplies and furniture. He carries everything from toilet seats to banjos; pocket knives to salt shakers; and hunting gloves to horseshoes.

High on the building's third floor is hidden surplus merchandise. It's here where Richardson's grandchildren explore such treasures as a wooden Uneeda Boss washing machine, never used, brand new Flexible Flyer sleds, now-obsolete hay hooks or a row of shiny bicycles.

"I'd venture to say that small hardware items are the biggest business," Richardson said, taking some time to think about it. "I expect we got customers here for 50 years."

And charge accounts are a mainstay, he said.

Though his grandfather operated three stores, with the others in Richwood and Durbin, Richardson keeps to the Marlinton one. He figures it's the largest in the county with the closest big rivals in Lewisburg or Elkins.